

OUR VILLAGE
AND
MECHANICS' INSTITUTE.

A LECTURE

BY

REV. WALTER INGLIS,

DELIVERED MARCH 26, 1867, BEFORE THE MECHANICS'
INSTITUTE OF KINCARDINE.

KINCARDINE:

Printed by J. Lang, "Bruce Review" Office.
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THE AUTHOR.

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LECTURE

Delivered by the Rev. Mr. Inglis, in the Town Hall, Kincardine, on
the auspices of the Mechanics' Institute.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is not without some hesitation that I appear before you as a lecturer, on behalf of the Kincardine Mechanics' Institute. Never having had such a duty laid upon me before, I have no old manuscripts at hand. My course of life has been such as to prevent me from making a hobby of some particular branch of science, or becoming a scribbler on literary subjects. Perhaps my impression of what a lecture ought to be is a little extra, yet I am sure it is safer, both for ones-self and the public, to have the measure of judgment high, rather than low. Fundamental exposition is necessary in producing a useful lecture, with a considerable amount of trimming to make it interesting. Our style of thought is based upon the writing that is found in Magazines of which we all read more or less; hence the need be of a local lecturer presenting his thoughts in true ship-shape fashion.

My first difficulty is to find a subject. On this, as on other matters, the old proverb will be found to hold good, "A bad reaper never gets a good sickle." Truly there is no lack of subjects. Wide is the domain of knowledge, from nothing to everything. The discursiveness of the human intellect is at once its strength and weakness, its freedom and its bondage. Wise men are making high bids for a close ancestral relation between the man and monkey. This may be so in body. It strikes me that there is a large amount of the humming bee in the mode of action, tastes and appetites of man,—a sip here, and away with a hum. Ever travelling, sipping and humming—such seems to be the nature of man's faculties of knowledge. Tastes differ, of course. So far as I am concerned, I would as soon claim a bee for my great grand sire as a monkey, aye, or a gorilla.

What agitations would disturb the repose of a gay, active, well-behaved bee, to have a contract for supply of honey to some dainty-mouthed persons notorious for honey eating? What would we say of the man who summoned his friends to a feast, and the fare was found to be much plainer than the usual daily meal?—Could kail hardly het again—haggis, lacking suet and salt, these would be poor cheer to a decent—not to speak of a fastidious Scotchman. Salt chunk, instead of good roast beef, steaming and savory, would reduce to silence any genial-hearted Englishman. It would

rouse the wrath of the mildest Irishman to have a big yellow turnip presented in the place of glorious white potatoes. Shall I venture further? Well, just think of trying to fix up a Yankee without a pie. Just think what a mischievous imp he would be, who dared try such tricks as the above mentioned. Formidable guests, magazine readers for any mental host. They know well what is what; as well as what is that. The intellect may not be stirred to its greatest heights and depths on English literature, but what a feast of reason and flow of soul is prepared and spread out on the pages of many of our periodicals! If I were not a humming-bee, what a subject for a lecture! The influence of modern literature upon society. Or still narrower: were I to introspect and state the results upon my own veritable self of Magazine reading during these last two years. What a subject when a man has to lecture *about* self not to self! Terrible fellows, these heavy quarterlies. Many a poor unfortunate reader has been made something like a big drum head by their speculations. Aye; but you have this year got 'Punch' as a corrective of base notes. Just so—extremes meet. To get up a lecture on the effects of Magazine reading, it strikes me would just suit more than one of us. What scope from a cartoon to a discussion on the Absolute—from Caudle's curtain lectures, to expositions on the Rights of Women—from the travels of Speke and Grant to the adventures of some young hero seeking the cows by the sound of a bell in the backwoods. This vast variety reminds me of the retort of a Scotchman who was taunted by an Englishman on the impropriety of calling a sheep's head a dish. "Dish or no dish—let me tell ye," said the eater, "that there is some fine confoused feedin' on't." Thank you, my countryman, for the expression. "Confoused, fine confoused feedin'!"

What would you say to a brief discussion on the traits and ultimate teachings of 'Punch'? What is the moral of the little funny man with the wise looking dog? Is there anything really or radically wrong in wit and fun with its queer grimace? Is it one of the essential forces of human might? Is it meat or medicine? Is it mental alcohol, or narcotic? This track would lead us into wandering mazes. This would be a lecture indeed! Whatever the oracle might utter, it is to be fervently

hoped that the destiny of the Anglo Saxon race is for a higher purpose than making wry faces at each other. What if the far reaching dogma, "like makes like," is found to be ultimate truth. "Punch; you must be a good boy, and try at times to look like other folk. Good-bye; and laugh neither at the good nor the true.

This hunt after a subject reminds me of Coelebs' search for a wife. What do you say to an inroad into the domain of argumentation? That would be unwise indeed, to venture away upon the dark deep waters of reason. Whatever light we may begin with, we shall at last grope in midnight darkness. It is a fancy some people have taken up with—that reason and reasoning brings the man nearer the light. Great mistake! The splendour of mid-day is found in unreasoned truth; every deduction weakens or refracts the ray. Why should not a man find it possible to argue away all his notions or reasons, as well as a gambler who has spent his last shilling? We shall leave J. S. Mill with the knotty questions of *Womens' Rights*, of *Sensations*, of *Liberty*, &c.

There is a field in the wide domain of modern literature that has much green grass, and many a gaudy tinted flower in its range to tempt a ramble. What say you to a talk upon the faculty of story-telling, alias the novel, alias invention? I have heard of a good simple-minded father who allowed his daughter to study the high art of cooking as part of her education and accomplishments. The result was most satisfactory. The old gentleman declared that it was "*well spent siller*." He must have been a Scotchman. "For," said he, "our Jean can noo mak a dinner oot o' naething." Happy father! happy daughter! but happier far the young man that would get such a treasure! Just think of it young gentlemen! A young dashing wife able to keep the house on 'naething.' If I were able to entertain you upon nothing, that would be something. Ah me! the difficulty of getting settled in mind; men choosing wives, women choosing colors, lecturers choosing subjects—difficulties, grave difficulties, all these. The melancholy fact follows, as Allan Ramsay has it: "Dorty bairns, they'll scart anither's leavin's at the last." That is too stiff for English ears—hear it then. "Pett-d children are glad at last to scrape peoples' pots for a morsel of food." Weary wanderers at last look homeward—happy recollections of

"Home, sweet home; there is no place like home."

What do you say to the home subject—Our Village! our Mechanics' Institute, and the influence of secular knowledge in advancing spiritual truth?

1st. OUR VILLAGE. What associations gather about the word home. Here is our home; here are our hearths and altars. It is no Botany Bay to us. Of our own choice we came here, in preference to 10,000 other localities in this wide land, to live, and if it is the will of

God, here to die. It is true that in this land of emigrations, many, very many never take root and never find a home; ever in search of that most desirable spot which is not to be found. They are to rest when and where the pocket is filled—alas for them! Have we, then, anything amongst us of root-giving vitality? Is there any soil for the heart, the affections to penetrate into? What are the advantages and natural beauties of this place? I recollect of being asked by a young lady what I thought of Canada, after I had been some months in it. "Well," I said, "Miss, it reminds me as much as anything of a fat pancake." Hastily my fair querist begged me to be genial. "I am truly in that happy state of mind," I replied; "pancakes are fine things, simple things; no difficulties in cutting and carving; no bones; all to be eaten." That was my impression of Canada then—a land to be eaten; good for meat. Kinecardine, it strikes me, has all the advantages of the pancake, but it has something more. Our broad lake bounds the Western sky. Whilst I am not a poet to sing its praises—to me Lake Huron is a thing of beauty, and it will be a source of joy to the people of our Village to the end of time. Who that has seen, upon a summer's evening, can ever forget or remain unimpressed with the beauty of the golden pathway from the bright setting sun over the deep blue waters! As I continue to gaze towards the distant horizon, I find year by year something new—still more delightful, and suggestive of all that is highest and best. So may our sun of life go down.

Again what a majesty there is in the wild sweep of the western blast! True, these fierce October and November gales are a terror to the struggling mariner—to the beholder from Kinecardine's heights, the surging wave is full of Heaven's music. As Byron says of old ocean, "There is music in its roar." No huckster can ever peddle away these natural beauties. In this utilitarian age, let us reflect upon the advantage of health which our position gives us. It is no vain boast, but a sober, well attested fact, that a more healthy spot is not to be found in this great North Eastern America. No agues and lingering fevers have here a birth-place or home. Our beach has no fatal miasma lurking amongst stagnant waters or intermediate marsh. The time is at hand when hundreds of weary invalids will seek from us, during summer, health and strength; when the oppressed with business and study, will find along our shore, peace from the murmuring or rather rippling wave. No sultry, choking, damp heats paralyze. Daring is the mosquito that can meet the requirements of life with us. These and other advantages we have as our heritage. No doubt our climate is in some sense severe, irregular and blustering. The finer fibre of life will find scant nourishment with us. Providence has given to every place its drawback. Often I think of the contrasts of this country and South Africa—especially

during winter—there no rain, no snow, the evenings dipping down to hear frost. One blessing to me is still to be mentioned, possessed by Kincairdine, and that no small one: we are out of the zone of deep Canadian mud. What a deplorable state for a man to be in, up to the knees in mud! You know the question put to strangers: What do you think of this place, this village, this town or county. Our situation is, to me, good. We lack the Maltland, of Goderich, and the Saugeen, of Southampton, and happily we lack the high, unsightly clay banks of the one, and the barren sand of the other. Taking our situation as a whole, I believe that we have a position capable of bringing out a fair, yes, beautiful village. The valleys behind contain nooks and retired spots for retreats, being built away from the bustle of life. All along our front, facing the lake, we have a narrow belt of sand, but it is living earth sand. Very little of our borders need be left to common and barren waste. Where the fruit tree cannot succeed, we have the delightful strawberry, ready to occupy and compete for high honors in the list of delicious fruits. Why should I detain you in noticing all the various developments capable of being put forth by our gardens? Let us turn our thoughts to the position of our village for business and ultimate growth. Our Eastern shore precludes the vision of city splendour—Railways may cut and divert trade—yet, weighing all these possibilities, if we have the right sample of men in our midst, we shall be able to compete in many respects, with all our neighbors in the Western Counties. As for the material part of our Village, it is still the day of raw youth—merely the beginnings of things. It would be difficult to form a picture of Kincairdine fifty years hence—probably not one of the present houses left standing—churches, school-houses, stores, &c., all rebuilt. When we hear, from time to time, of the havoc made by fire among these temporary wooden buildings, one does long for stone or brick, with other preventives of such a sad calamity as has befallen Bothwell the other day.

There is something dignified and becoming in building houses that will last hundreds, if not thousands of years. Building is not the work of this age or country. The representative man is the clearer of land—it is enough for one generation to clear away the forest. Often I feel pained that there is so little taste displayed in the laying out of our Canadian villages and towns; our streets are too narrow. Look at Queen street; it ought to have been half as wide again. Again, there is no provision for a park where the young can play and the aged rest. What a book to read—the mode, style, taste and finish given to a house, street, or town. You know the man by his surroundings. What is the cause of so little originality or taste displayed among us? I hear some exclaiming, poverty, Sir, poverty. Not altogether, friend. Is there not less of design (I mean of

the beautiful) in people of cold regions, than in those of warm? This won't account for all that we see either. What can be the cause of an intelligent people allowing pigs and geese to be the playmates of their children? Think of a child's earliest associations having the inevitable pig at the door! With what indignation would an Arab or a Kafir spurn the company. As a moralist, speculating on these weak points of our people, I should say, *greed* is largely the cause of our lack of refined taste; greed is a great absorbent of the beautiful. I am not sure but that a darkening kind of film must grow over the eye, arising from lack of use, like fog on stones. As a physiologist, I have my fears that grog and tobacco take off the fine edge of sight and taste for the beautiful. A man continually engaged in filling spittoons can hardly be reckoned a man of delicate vision. With all the faults of our race, there is, nevertheless, a long way between the neatest and the ugliest; whether in the individual, the house, the street or the town. And the question presses itself upon us: have we the men to make a handsome town? Before passing on to another topic, allow me to put another question. Why have we not competition in neat villages at our National Agricultural Show, as well as other trials of skill? We try the buildings on the farms; why not be able to put the finger on the map and say: here is the best built, the cleanest, yes, the model village in British North America? Why may not Kincairdine aim at this honor? It would pay.

Is one amongst us found so void
Of beauty's worth, from utter greed,
That by his plans and clumsy craft,
Our streets are spoiled for lack of art;
"If such there breathe, go mark him well,"
Kincairdine has for him no wail;
His name and grave shall be forgot,
No stone shall mark the dreary spot.

2nd. Having spoken of the outward, let us direct our attention to the man of our village—to ourselves—in other language, to our Institute. To the thoughtful, great are the issues of life, in the case of individuals, of villages, and of nations. Of old, the cry was raised on Mount Seir: "Watchman, what of the night?" The strange double answer was given, The morning cometh, also the night. Impressing the future for an answer, we may well say, the light cometh, also the night. There is no doubt, a tremendous conflict is going on in our midst, between good and evil. Knowledge is being increased. It is yet to be seen whether there is also an increase of sorrow, or of joy. Knowledge produces wants and enlarges desire. It is yet to be seen whether the supply is equal to the demand. Whatever the future may be, how sad to read of the past! It seems a dark and void chaos. Let us read about our own beloved Fatherlands—the educated, the wise, the good, the loving and the true, have been comparatively few indeed. Take Scotland, with its schools for centuries, what ignorance, wretch-

edness and vice are found in our towns and cities! All the means put forth to stem this torrent of iniquity have in many respects come short. With other means of education, Mechanics' Institutes arose. We had considerable difficulty in getting hold of a subject; it would be an interesting topic to write upon: the rise, progress and benefit of such means of instruction. I wish I had it in my power to lay before you the results of one or two of the most successful. I knew a little of the Institute in Edinburgh, when a student, some thirty years ago. I knew some striking examples of mental culture, in the midst of daily, drudging toil. My lot has been far apart from city life. Like 'a voice crying in the wilderness,' my days have been spent amidst the rude beginnings of things. The same principle and power that led me to the wilds of Africa, led others to put forth the hand and tongue to educate the ignorant masses in our cities. After all that has been done, poverty and hard early work still hold multitudes in their grim grip. Vice is ever casting up to the surface thousands of neglected youth. The race of life becomes yearly more exciting. Neck and neck men hurry onward; the prize is to the strong and to the swift; the cry comes up from behind and from below—Onward. To halt is peril; to stand is death. Men must now have knowledge, or sink in irretrievable poverty. Hence the cry of knowledge; knowledge is bread, it is life. Woe to the ignorant! It is no longer permitted or satisfactory to pick out a few sons of genius and educate them, and let the dull mass alone. The motto now is, "lay hold of the mass, let genius shift for itself." Common stones do well for building comfortable houses; many fair homes are found, though not built of polished marble. We work up our rags, as well as our broken pots; we hurry away city filth by unheard of modes, to the hungry field; thus saving our people from fever and pestilence, and our poor from hunger. If it is a thing of terror to allow city filth to gather, it is far more frightful to allow ignorance and vice to stalk abroad. Political economists tremble to see an ignorant brute force creature, as much as they do a cess-pool. Selfishness of old said, "let them alone, they are always accursed." Now it cries, "Educate; lo, I perish! by the night, the mental and moral typhoid arising from ignorant men. Right thinkers are weary of living in the neighborhood of brute force and savage ferocity, weary of dull ennui and degrading vice—weary of soulless gossip carried on so extensively during those precious hours between work and sleep. It is either slay, or be slain, with these gaunt giants, no neutrality, no treaty of peace. Two questions present themselves, in reference to our Institute which we take the liberty of answering.

1st. Are there any prospects of our Institution being permanent? If such a hope is to be indulged, can any thing be done by us to effect greater good? In pressing an answer to the question of permanence it will be needful

to lay before you some general principles.

1st. What is permanent must have its seat deep in human nature. With what tenacity men hold on to some things. The Athenian desire of new things has its limitation. We cast away much—old clothes, &c. It is said, we even cast away our very body every 7 years; but we tenaciously retain the Ego, the I, our identity. Look at some of the instances of the permanent. In this great wave of emigration, many very many have flung away the comforts of life, and rushed to the back woods to possess a freedhold, a piece of land—believing that happiness must be obtained by a permanent possession of land. They were borne onwards by a fervid imagination, until settled in the midst of primeval forests, bye and bye they awake as from a feverish dream—finding misery and want in the face like a grim wolf. Gentle creatures! What could they do in chopping and burning? "Their nieve a nit, their arm a guid whupshank." Amidst the sad examples of misery multitudes still cry out for land—though they are in every way unfitted for tilling the ground. Take again, religion. Combination for worship will remain as long as our race exists—because it springs from the deepest desires and necessities of man. Look again at school houses. Children must be brought together to learn the elements of knowledge. What are Mechanics' Institutes but the carrying out of the process of education amongst the working mass? By the law of progress man daily becomes more complex and universal in his tastes and desires. The great world is coming nearer to him every day. The findings of science continually press upon his attention strange things. His wonder is largely fed by fables—not ancient fables. No man can conduct business without a wide range of outside knowledge. Daily we hear of men missing their mark from this cause. They go on very well for a time—but they lack bottom; in plain phrase, they possess not breadth of understanding. To supply this lack many young working men are compelled to attend the village or city night college—there to find needful knowledge. Poor fellow! What did the knowledge of his school boy days amount too? Reading, writing, calculation then only begun—to become of use they must be carried on—developed. Work he must during the day. Golden precious hours are those between 7 and 10 for this young aspiring mind! This interdependence of knowledge is fully seen in the so called learned professions. An accomplished divine must intermeddle with all knowledge. So in like manner the jurist and the doctor. What endless ramifications have the arts and sciences! So in like manner mechanics and artisans, farmers and ploughmen; yea you find this overlapping all the way through life. Is it not miserable to see a huge hulk of a fellow topple off asleep whenever a book is put into his hand? His mass of raw brain is soft as pulp. Thought is a weariness to him. Ten to one he will harden off at last by hard drinking and vice. What a melancholy

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thought, that one half of scholars never get over the drudgery of reading, never enter upon the pleasures of knowledge! They know not the pleasure of a good book.

2nd. What is permanent must be cultivated actively. The soul of man can only be fully developed by having the intellect sharpened by use. Solomon long ago saw this truth, "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." We must be something more than mere hearers if permanent good and life are to characterize us. What is the reason that mere hearers of lectures, sermons and prayers, &c., make so little progress? A mass of church goers are little better than idle dreamers. Instead of growing in knowledge, their intellectual powers become all shrunk and withered—aye multitudes, hear themselves into mental and as a consequence spiritual death. You never could teach the child by lectures. The little one must energize, repeat, imitate. The scholar all the way through his course, must answer questions, commit to memory. He does not know true academic life until he has many questions to ask. Further on he adds speaking and writing, and becomes himself an instructor. It is an old saying the best way to teach yourself is to teach others. Without these active stimulants the mind will wander, dream and finally sleep. True advance in education is putting forth the active. No man can learn a trade or art by merely looking on. In fact the doom of heaven is written against all lookers on. There is no provision made for them but death, physical, mental and spiritual. This is the weak point of many men and Institutes in these days—they think they have the privilege of looking on. The passive haunts me like a hideous nightmare—like a huge misshapen hobgoblin spread out over acres of land catching in its deadly arms the unwary traveller. Laziness is the popular term for this dire enemy. Let us eschew it, pass it by—yea flee from it—struggle and fight it—yea, pray against it. Allow me to say that reading itself becomes in its turn passive. Like many things else, in the world, reading will never make a man. Reading, hearing, taking in, are means to an end, that is, to give out. Scholars speak of *helicones librorum*, gluttons of books. The miser, poor man is looked upon as one of the most miserable of men—wrapped up in selfishness and fear, he dies surrounded by his bags of gold. The miser of knowledge is a far worse man to his fellows—as we shall see in the third observation.

3rd. What is permanent must be unselfish, or in other terms we must give out knowledge, if I were to finish off with a sermon, my text would be, "No man liveth to himself." Knowledge must circulate—must be free. It is mine—it is yours—it is Heaven's current coin to man. Its image and superscription is not Caesar's—but that of Caesar's God. Woe betide us, if we try to hoard, to hide knowledge from our fellows. To use another illustration, knowledge must flow like water. When that essential in-

redient of life ceases to flow, it stagnates—becomes miasma—death. What, says one, are a man's thoughts not his own? Can he not bury them in his own bosom? They will become like the old story of the man with the stolen fox in his bosom. They will gnaw upon the vitals of the hider. The ways of circulation or giving out are various. A man invents some new instrument or plan of action—he makes. He also writes an account of the same. Others follow suit. They give out. This is the reason why in our day, mechanical and agricultural mind is so healthy. They have no secrets. The law of patent is simply a toll gate upon the Queen's highway. A means to keep the road in repair and further improve it. The inventors of the age are full of matter—like Elihu of old they must give out. Go to the jolly farmer whose head is teeming with new ideas and improvements. No dumb dog is he. What delight he has in showing his friend all over his grounds, drains, fences, manures, crops, herds of cattle, &c., are all subjects of deep interest to him. You will say, the moving spring of all this is selfishness. Not necessarily so. His interest he can see as a consequent of public benefit—not the cause. How strikingly is all this health of mind exhibited in our agricultural shows, &c., when we come to contrast classes that would hide knowledge from their fellows! Striding are the lessons from those who prevented the Bible from being read by the people.

Let us look at your position as a society. One of the causes of your formation was to learn to speak. Well! great is the gift of public speaking, and it ought to be most carefully cultivated. Let the young man of fluent speech cultivate eloquence in all its persuasive forms. Let the logician enter the lists of close debate—let him feel the warrior's stern joy in meeting a foeman worthy of his steel. Gifts are various. Many can neither plead nor reason. Look at many of my countrymen. Some of them neither fools nor surly, dirty dogs—who snarl even at the question of, How is the way? Saunders' strength lies in question and brief answer. None of your long-winded stories for him; come to the point at once, out with it, no humming and hawing. Ask him a question or two—his answer is like a policeman's baton, short, stout, decisive. Have you any questions to put yourself Saunders? asks the bystander. Deed have a', says the auld farand dooce man—a' wad like to speer a question. Look out neighbor with the fluent tongue! Some hard posers are coming. Some people try to get up a joke on the man of questions and answer. They may laugh that win. It is the grand old Socratic mode of teaching, of acquiring knowledge. Go on old fellow, catechism and altogether. Give out, not grudgingly but with full pressed down measure. One of the grandest forms of giving out is to be found in conversation. Have you read Wilson's Notes? I have to confess only to a taste of the book. What life, when men are warmed up in conversation! Think of the flow of soul when wit flashes, and sense penetrates—all the foul-

ties of the soul awake. This is peculiarly life at home—life in the man's den. I detain you on this point. Why should I not linger? I feel the importance of the question raised. If our Institute is based upon intellectual selfishness we cannot be permanent. Ere I pass on let me re-join again to the miser. When he dies, all his gold is brought forth—not a penny left—though late, all is put into circulation again. Not so with the man that keeps all his knowledge to himself. All goes down to the grave. True, he leaves his library. A small gift to posterity. The monument of a fool.

4th. I would notice again: for permanent life there must be a sufficient amount of vitality or momentum to propel onwards. Life is motion—death is inert. What I want to express on this head is that activity must rise to a certain height like the thermometer—say blood heat. This is what is called the enthusiasm of humanity. Metals only fuse at a certain heat. Iron only welds at white heat. Some such analogy is found in the soul. It has its welding white heat—as all you married folks well remember. It was a white heat that day when you joined hands. All true lovers of knowledge must have the white heat of intellectual passion. A celebrated writer says well of virtue, "It must be passionate." I am well aware of the wide application of the word *enthusiasm* in a bad sense. It is quite possible for a stupid apprentice to be blowing the fire when the iron is burning. Passion without reason is madness. It is a bad sign of the times when high breeding has ever to show cold impassive moderation. When the great man hears—he is to look as if he knew all about it—as if nothing particular was being narrated. True a man cannot always be jumping about like an impatient child—but I have no patience with that feckless soul that is not waiting at his own boundary of knowledge for something new—who receives it with zest, and eats it hungrily.

It may be asked—How are we to know the right gauge of enthusiasm? Simply by realizing knowledge as a necessity. When a man is truly aware that he cannot do without knowledge, he has the passion we speak of. Is not this so with all those miserable appetites that carry away men? The drunkard cannot do without his grog. Gamblers must play. All the way through the ranks of sin what enthusiasm men display! Pickpockets have a perfect delight in their high profession of skill. Truth, or true knowledge is a fair lady—coy, and modest. He that gains her hand must press his suit or he will miserably fail. It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing. The fire of the wise man's soul has its place to heat up the whole house. It is the part of a madman to fire his house in order to warm himself. Miserable lost one! He did not intend it! yet all is lost—burnt to death. Are those terrible examples going to make men put out their fires immediately? By no means. It is a cold night—put on another moral log—

all the stove—that is—the heart. Let it talk, let fire—and wind—and cold make music.—Pipes and chimney are all good and clean. Happy man, who realizes life as gain—all gain—time not lost.

5th. The last observation I have to make on the law of permanence is—*Brotherhood*. Human nature is ever running into brotherhoods for good or evil. Little can be done by man alone.—Hence the necessity of Union. It may be difficult to get us welded into a homogeneous mass—seeing we are in a measure all strangers to each other, trained in different modes of thought as well as life, we lack the antecedents of fresh mental friendship. Like our Volunteers we can be drilled—keep step—march—wheel—form—charge—fire. Philosophic ties have great elasticity. What shall we say if the strongest in Kinsardine are found amongst the tipplers, gamblers? Do they not spend more money upon each other? Query—Do they heat the church brotherhood? Tat, tat! What is a dollar to two maudlin cronies? Piety has no chance with its coppers.

2nd. The second question I proposed to ask was—can anything be done by us to effect greater good? I do not intend to assume the position a fault finder. In your case I am no destructive. What you have done—let it stand on its own good foundation. Go on your way—building stone after stone—adding wing after wing, until a goodly composite of old and new may arrest the eye of the passing stranger. Let us be impressed with the gravity of our situation as the fathers and founders of a Literary Institute. To have a good end you must have a good beginning. Small matters have much influence in starting upon life. We may have hindrances in the way of attaining to city greatness—but we have nothing in the way of reaching imperial mind. If we are personally small, unnoticed and unknown in the world of letters, who can tell the future, and the influences we may put in motion? Whatever field for ultimate development, great men may find in our capitals—villages and out of the way places are favourite spots for the origin of genius. As streams have their source in the distant mountains—so these great centres of thought have been gathered from dark unknown distant villages, hamlets and huts, as well as from halls and palaces. It was a glorious thought that dwelt in the mind of the Jewish mother, the possibility of giving to the world the Messiah. Is there the possibility of the man of the age—aye, or country being born and educated here? High hopes, how inspiring! Possibilities, how real! That man is to be somewhere. Is he not worth expecting? Our motto being.—What is possible for man to do—we shall aim at. Longfellow says well:

On the world's broad field of battle,
On the bivouac of life,
Be not like dumb driven cattle,
Be a hero in the strife.

The age of physical prowess has past. Not yet mental and moral. I well recollect when a

wee fellow building castles in the air, of reading Blind Harry's Wallace. The effect was, that Scotchmen were far stronger men than the English. There was a passage that eclipsed all the rest. Wallace and his army were besieging one of the English towns—Durham or York. (mind you it is more than forty years since I saw the book.) Wallace had ordered his men to drive in the gate. They failed. He ordered them to stand back. On the Hero went like a mighty battering ram, drove the gate before him, with three ells of the wall. Was not that great, grand? What nation like my own? said the boy. It was a big story of course. It was meat suited for the hairbrained boy. Popular ignorance has to be stormed, its heavy gates driven in, its mud walls levelled.

I would tender the following advice. First, let a large proportion of your subjects of debate be *practica*, definite, capable of an *aye* or a *no*. I am well aware you must always keep on hand a few old gates and walls for Mr. Hardhead to run against. If you do not, Don Quixote, he will try his strength some other where. Mind you, I speak not of your past as if you had erred. I believe its in human nature, to show good and valid reasons why the moon is not made of cheese. It may be said that the local, the definite, the real would engender strife. Strife! out upon it. Are we yet to take a vote on the question. Is wrath reason? Why to be sure if we still believe in brute force we must pout, sulk, scold, declaim, denounce, rave and rattle, and then wind up with coats off, and settle matters with fist-cuffs.

Proof, fact, demonstration give edge to the mind. Let the locomotive be suited to the road.

2nd. I have the impression that some meetings ought to be held in the free and easy conversational style—chairman of course—no standing—mingling the Socratic form, of putting a question on the back of an assertion. This talent is required in this land of law and process. One argument in behalf of this is the love of brevity in this our day and generation. The mass of men are fearfully one sided. I must say I should like to see this draw badger game, by posing a fellow given to assertions with a few questions. Rare talent! to question closely.

3rd. You are aware there was a frightful controversy among the philosophers of a past age. The colours were: Realist and Formulist. I desire to touch on form—it, even it, is a reality. Mode of speech enters largely into the influence of man in conveying knowledge. Mode of speech is a cash article. One can hardly do business with a man that neither pronounces words rightly nor cares a straw for manner. Some of you may remember the story of Coleridge, if I mistake not. He saw a man in the tavern whose appearance pleased him very much. He was sure there was mind in the man. At last they were seated at the public dinner table. Coleridge watched his man. Something being offered to eat, the man utter-

ed, 'Them's the jockeys for me.' It was enough. He had a big empty house to let. Wonder and interest were turned into contempt.

We have apparently failed in public readings. Why not vary your Friday nights with a reading of five minutes from three or four members—men being appointed to correct errors of pronunciation, &c., &c. None of us can be so thin in the skin as not to stand this gentle process of training. Fine field for improvement amongst us. We may be able by this means of progress to bring to the village thousands of dollars.

Rude speech is fit to give some people a headache. This is neither a joke nor a fancy but a well known fact. Friendship is often formed by reason of speech. Many a Scotchman has often groaned by reason of his Doric hindering him in life. Scotch is Scotch. English is English. Speak in London as the Londoners do.

4th. Whilst we are doing our very best to get a library I would suggest that we begin and press into existence a cabinet of all the scientific facts or specimens in our neighbourhood or county. Let us all choose our hobby. I should like to see before me a specimen of every kind of wood (of native growth). This might be put together very neatly by some of our mechanics. Again, plants, roots, flowers, &c., &c. Again, earths or soils. Think of a skilled eye coming here and finding the clay for Bath Brick! What a fact if it should take the prize at Paris this year! Again rocks, stones, shells, &c. Again our birds and beasts. This would be something to show our visitors from afar. You are aware that men of the highest culture recommend as a necessary branch of education, some science that requires the habit of observation. The eye takes in just as much as there is soul behind it. Baron Humboldt said of an American that he had travelled more and seen less than any man he knew.

5th. Let us as one grand part of our work, make our Institute a school,—a house—a den for the young and thoughtless. We must have something to compete with the Bar-room and Billiard table. Waiving drunkenness altogether, these places cannot makemen.

I was glad to see that by the energies of a few in London, C.W. a reading-room has been there established. Tell me of a town that has no reading room, and I will pronounce the anathema of ignorance upon it.

As King Charles II said of Prince George of Denmark, that he had tried him drunk and tried him sober, but he had found nothing in him. Is it a vision of the night or of coming day that I see a comfortable room open for all comers from 6 to 10 every night for reading, yea, or gossiping if you will, in this our village?

6th. And to tuck it up in a word, as the old divine did when at the seventieth head of his discourse, it has at times struck me that intellectual societies fail in not having robes of office, and titles of honour. Carlyle is right—

clothes rule the world. They are the banner of Humanity. As Carlyle says—let a wicked imp strip the British Empire of its robes of office—all power would vanish like smoke. A large amount of Freemasonry is found in its antique splendour of costume. Look at the Orange Society. Take away the sash and that big lout of a fellow would not give a cent for all that remains. Look at the Tee-totalers—wise in their day and generation. Yes, look everywhere—but among ourselves. What do you find? Robes of office—grand worthy Patriarch—grand master and other high flying titles. Let the order be given for all the Kincardine Societies to turn out and see and be seen. Why the learned, wise, literary Institute men would be found nowhere. The very children would be apt to hee-hee us. Our fair ones would hang down the head. It is true that there is an anachronism—a screw loose, in putting sashes, and belts and mottoes on the shoulders of those old representative men, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. No doubt these find old worthies would protest against such fashion. It would be as hard to fix them up after the Nineteenth century, as to put sackcloth over their loins. It would be a day of grief and humiliation. Never mind those nice speculative points. We want to catch the gay-sighted fellows, and lead them to higher things. Some may call these dressing tendencies—weakness. What do we say of our Universities?—they are gowned and capped. One thing—we are not yet known in the village. By all means let us turn out some fine day, with the Band at our head, and demonstrate the fact of our existence to all classes. It would not do to carry our LIBRARY with us—as emblems—our weapons of war. Yet what have we else?

What a glorious sight to see youth following in the paths of wisdom! It would be to the advancement of our village—yes, of every town on the continent to have our halls open every night for one branch of study or another. Is man to be ever as he has been? Is the multitude always going to play the fool? Can we not join in the strain of our accomplished countryman:

"Oh haste your tardy coming days of gold,
Long by prophetic minstrelsy foretold,
Where your bright purple stretches the orient skies;
Rise, Science, Freedom, Peace, Religion rise."

The third topic we proposed to discuss was scientific truth advancing spiritual truth. The difficulties of our position come from other quarters as well as from the ignorant and the wicked. In the religious world there are men who do not give secular truth its due. There stands a very respectable man who tells us that it is enough for him to know his Bible. He looks upon science, literature, as by-paths to be avoided. I believe in the value of earthly knowledge possessing power to aid the spiritual. In illustrating this point I shall lead you to the wilds of Africa as presenting facts of the simplest primary order. In the great work of

Missions different opinions have been advanced as to the best modes of preaching the Gospel. One says Christianize, then civilize, another says civilize, then Christianize. Whilst I have little sympathy with the latter class, as they are only talkers—Athenian critics—I cannot agree with the former. The findings of experience show that civilization and Christianity go hand in hand. Look at the question from an every day, common sense point of view. You have to raise up nations, just as you do families and individuals. How does the mother deal with her son and daughter? She washes, clothes, feeds, then sends to school. There we have mind and body growing together. Eating and thinking are good friends—so are body and soul—time and eternity. You will all admit that before you can influence a man you must command his respect. Will you listen to a man whom you hold in contempt? How are you to arrest the attention of that fierce warrior? With your Bible? Verily not. With Religion? No, not at all. He has none, he is armed with spear, shield, and battle axe. You go forth with him, not to battle, but to bring down the lion, the elephant, the rhinoceros, the buffalo. He looks at your weapons, he has never seen the like. There is a flash, a report, and the still distant beast lies dead. Oh this to him is power—new power—fire from heaven. The white man is at once admitted as the superior. You are in a sense his lord. This is the beginning of the white man's influence. All wish a gun. By this step you make the African dependant upon you. I could go therefore with the Bible in one hand and the gun in the other, and give them—shall I say it?...both, the gun first and then the Bible to these warlike people. I by no means say as the late lamented Livingston did—that guns stop war. This step leads to further intercourse—then, by the blessing of God, to the Bible. It, alas, is the last thing of the white man perceived to be of value.

Again, there was a swamp of about 1000 acres at my station. I told the chief to drain and dry it. The old wise men took up the case—cried impossible. I reasoned—told them what had been done. All was of no avail. Few men can reason—they rather believe. It was a matter of faith. We laid aside talk as useless. The chief, believing that I was neither a fool nor a rogue, told me to go ahead and that he would follow. I ordered my waggon-driver, a noble little fellow, to take the plough to the swamp side. I got all the spades we could muster far and near. It was early spring. The ground was bare—as the rank reeds and grass had been burnt. With ten good oxen and a powerful plough, with share as sharp as a knife, we drew a furrow along the edge, for half a mile—sweltered through two fountains to the hip—returned with a back furrow. The chief ordered his men to cut and throw aside the tough matted sod. We gave them other two furrows. Then commenced the digging a drain 3 feet deep. A strong stream of water followed. After this, a year passed. By this time

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the ditch had done its work. We carried the poor people with us. All believed. It was a fact—a demonstration—of power and wisdom. Look again at the power of surgery. I shall not speak of my own simple aid in that line. Among the French Missionaries there was a very accomplished doctor. There came a very serious case of surgery under his care. He cut—cured. Why, the people said it was a miracle. All missionaries ought to be accomplished surgeons. Let this case suffice. Poor fellows! Books, Reading, &c., &c., seem to many child's play—a kind of legerdemain. There was one point of book-lore that was a poser. We shall suppose a chief has some message to another chief some hundreds of miles distant. The custom was to give a verbal message. Let me tell you in doing this work they excel. But there is a missionary where the chief lives to whom the message is sent. Your chief comes and requests you to write a letter. He dictates, you write word for word. The messenger hears all, away he goes—doubtful; if it is the first time he has done such work. He gives the letter to the chief. Away they go to the missionary. He reads. The astonished man hears word for word as his chief had dictated. What a wonder to this poor rude man! To him a fact, a demonstration of the power and wisdom of the white man. We might have led you to examples, demonstrating goodness, yes goodness. They saw and said that the "white man had two hearts." Aye, from the days of Esau and Jacob, there have been amongst us two hearts—two people.

The lessons I mean to enforce by these examples are briefly as follows:

1st. Few men can reason or deal in abstract truth. You have to demonstrate—put before the eye to convince. Christianity is a fact—facts—not arguments in advance, but as after-riders. Faith is weak.

2nd. Art and science from these simple examples, upwards, help the spiritual. Therefore I bid "God speed" to all true earthly knowledge. I know this great gift can be perverted in the hands of wicked men. Such for instance, as the adoption, by a very able man of science, of some religious crotchet. His weight is great. Huxley says our great-grandfathers were apes. The question is put. Do you hear that? A great mathematician says he does not believe in the Books of Moses. Men cry: Ho! A Bishop! A scholar! Do you hear that? Proudly we point to men that did and do believe.

3rd. Your artisans and men of work—mark the weight of a first class workman. He bulks in the eyes of poor struggling apprentices as a great man. For good or evil, this man of skill will have more authority, weight, influence, than any man or minister, who presents to his opaque vision, pure thought alone.

4th. Kindness commands man and beast. Never preach or talk to a hungry, starving man. Feed him—warm him—then say, poor fellow! Want of attention to this is one great cause why multitudes of citizens, workmen, have drifted away from the Church—the Bible.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I have said in one shape or another what I intended, and probably, as the Irishman said, a little more. I could have wished for more time, in which to get my ideas a little better put together.

Beginnings and beginners are generally spared polish. If I have given you truth in the rough-cast, to lay on the mind, it is well—I am content. I have to thank you for your attention—that so many have come out to hear. It is pleasing to see all classes represented, I have to state that so far as I am concerned, my connection with you, and, all my associations of memory during the last two years, are very pleasant. I have had some "grand confoused feedin'" from the magazines. It is a luxury of no ordinary kind to sit down to a good Quarterly. What cares the reader for Lake Huron's winds and Canadian colds? They rather help you on with some trenchant article, on politics, history or war. Fine, to get away in thought to lands of sun and heat, when your own climate is at zero. When the imagination fires up and leads you through the wild and the beautiful—the new and the old—the reminiscences of the past—the very spot where you sit becomes a sacred centre. If you get wearied with the dull and the local—as one poor yearning spirit sang while among us—"But here in the wilds of the West, to-morrow the same as to-day"—it refreshes the whole man, to get away amongst the revolutions of the past—to read of the heroes that fought and bled for us, and taste of the cosmopolitan life. The local is ever to be balanced with universal—point given to the wide, wide world, to the general domain of thought, by the local—the two-fold man working out a glorious harmony.

My lecture, you may say, is the reflection of a magazine reader—it is also introductory and general. You will please throw the mantle of charity over my short-comings. The little labour bestowed on this paper has been free from pain—save the consciousness of what would be improvements. The well known queer old lines have just turned up as a refrain:

"The man that fights and runs away,
May live to fight some other day;
But he that fights and there is slain,
Shall never live to fight again."

Will the following clink for a little small change?

He that writes with little pain,
May try for you a theme again;
But he that writes against the grain,
Will never try to write again.

It will never do to close with home-spun doggerel. That the Kincardine Mechanic's Institute may prosper is my earnest prayer. Let its motto be, "*Eato perpetua*."

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And departing, leave behind us
Foot-prints on the sands of time;

Foot-prints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labour and to wait.